

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY, TOWN OF ARLINGTON

20 ACADEMY STREET, SUITE 203, ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476-6436 (781) 316-3431



MEETING MINUTES

October 19, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kerrie Fallon, Heidi Hample, Janice Dallas, Barbara Jones, Susan James.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Maureen St. Hilaire, Barbara Cutler.

OTHERS PRESENT: Carol Kowalski, Director of Planning and Community Development, Jack Jones ADA Coordinator, Paolo Marinelli.

Carol Kowalski said the Arlington Redevelopment Board would have to open a special permit to make changes to 27 Maple Street. She said she was trying to get some money in the budget to do something to the circular brick drive and landing.

This building houses the Senior Center, Council on Aging, Commission on Disabilities and DDS.

Carol said she needed to look at different applications and has been in touch with Kurt Kelly from DPW for cost estimates.

The town would not need to go to the local historic district for a hearing for a certificate of appropriateness to alter the paving around the property. Carol said she did not know about the Historical Commission until she learns more about them.

B. Jones asked when the building became historic. Carol said she would find out when the building became a local historic district. She said she did not think this would be an obstacle with them but that we would need to work together to approach the Historical Commission. The Redevelopment board is the owner but is not making the request.

Carol suggested continuing to look at different treatments that could be considered right for function and appearance and agreed the brick has to go and to also look at the primary users.

B. Jones pointed out that there are property, maintenance, personal liability and rehabilitation costs.

Carol mentioned the paying tenants and how she could help us with some of their arguments if a change is made. B. Jones said we should be part of the process but we are not the decision makers. In order to change the special permit a request has to be made to the Arlington

Redevelopment board to reopen the environmental design that approved the renovation and site plan of the building. This involves advertised public hearing with the proposal of changes. This process will involve the Planning Department and the Commission on Disabilities.

K. Fallon said John Jope will also be included in the request as well as reaching out to other tenants of the building who may also want to be included.

Carol will contact Donna Eidson from the Continuing Ed program. Heidi Hample said all the stakeholders should be involved in the request.

B. Jones asked if, in the interim, anything can be done to fix the area where people keep falling. J. Jones said this is the area right outside the door near the drain. C. Kowalski said she would get Kurt Kelly to meet at the location again to see if there can be a short term improvement while we go through the process. C. Kowalski asked if she, Jack and Kurt could meet and get something done on an urgent basis.

P. Marinelli said the entire civic block needed to be considered for all users. C. Kowalski said that was a different jurisdiction. Paolo asked about a brick policy which the Commission has been waiting years to be developed. B. Jones said at Town Meeting in 2006 the Board of Selectmen said there would be no more brick and that a policy would be developed by the Planning Department.

C. Kowalski said she will not be writing a brick policy for the Town. She will, however, be helping the community through a comprehensive master plan process which has 9 elements, one of which is circulation. Carol said the Board of Selectmen, Historic Commission and the community need to be the ones who develop the policy in which she would help infacilitating. B. Jones asked when this would get started and said the Commission should be included in that process. Carol said there would be 3 workshops in the next year.

J. Jones said the Board of Selectmen, in particular, Kevin Greeley did not want to write the policy since it would affect future Boards of Selectmen. P. Marinelli said we've been told that the Planning Department would be writing this policy. C. Kowalski said she has been gathering information on how other communities handle brick in historic districts to help stakeholders make decisions on policy and can help draft sample policies.

Paolo asked if concrete was one of the surfaces that were being considered. C. Kowalski said she did not know what surface to suggest that would meet historic and ADA compliance simultaneously. Paolo said that concrete would be the ideal and asked if Carol would support that around the building. Carol said she would find it difficult to support concrete in the historic district and that she had not done research about surfaces in this type of area.

Carol said she can help get the site outside the building fixed right away but cannot answer how the sidewalks in the civic block will be handled at this time. In the short term she would like to get the area at 27 Maple Street fixed.

K. Fallon suggested reaching out to other Commissions and making this a bigger issue in supporting one another regarding bricks. H. Hample will talk to a landscape architect.

C. Kowalski will find out what statutory jurisdiction the Historical Commission has over the building and whether they are just advisory.

H. Hample asked if she could call other states to find out about their policies.

Paolo mentioned a southern state that has cobblestones and brick on their roadways but pedestrian crossings and sidewalks had smooth surfaces. He will try to bring a picture.

Carol wants to meet with Jack and Kurt, speak to Christine Sapinski about appropriate surfaces and come back with a site plan with what jurisdiction the Redevelopment Board has so we know what we can present to them to modify the special permit.

H. Hample asked if noncompliance was just due to psychological factor of human nature. B. Jones said the law requires that sidewalk work, road work, etc. has to follow the ADA guidelines though this has not happened in some instances in town yet the town has accepted the work.

K. Fallon suggested the Commission collaborate and do research to come back with information that we can share with Carol regarding the bricks.

K. Fallon suggested the Commission be informed of any new projects so that we can be involved from the beginning. C. Kowalski said she will be sure to get the information to Jack Jones so that he can bring it to the Commission. She will be returning in November or January with the site plan. She will send a list of tasks to Jack to be sure she has covered everything.

B. Jones moved to accept the August meeting minutes with one correction and seconded by H. Hample. Heidi Hample was present. B. Jones moved to accept the September meeting minutes, seconded by Janice Dallas.

The curb cut project has been started and 17 curb cuts should be completed by thanksgiving. Work will continue in the spring.

J. Jones wrote an article that will be published in the Arlington Advocate. Members discussed other ways to solicit membership.

Heidi said John Thompson and his service dog, Wexler will attend next month's meeting. She also said John is interested in serving on the Commission.

Members read the article about diversity B. Jones submitted and suggested be sent to the 20/20 diversity task group.

The letter sent to the FHA was discussed. J. Jones will get a copy of the response from the DPW.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.